The Seed Sower.

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Her World.

Behind them slowly sank the western world,
Before them new horizons opened wide,—
"Yonder," he said, "old Rome and Venice wait,
And lovely Florence by the Arno's tide."
She heard, but backward all her heart had sped,
Where the young moon sailed through the sunset red;
"Yonder," she thought, "with breathing soft and deep,
My little lad lies smiling in his sleep."

They sailed where Capri dreamed upon the sea,
And Naples slept beneath her olive trees;
They saw the plains where trod the gods of old
Pink with the flush of wild anemones.
They saw the marbles by the Master wrought
To shrine the heavenly beauty of his thought.
Still ran one longing through her smiles and sighs,—
"If I could see my little lad's sweet eyes!"

Down from her shrine the dear Madonna gazed,
Her baby lying warm against her breast;
"What does she see?" he whispered, "can she guess
The cruel thorns to those soft temples pressed?"
"Ah, no!" she said, "she shuts him safe from harms,
Within the love-locked harbour of her arms,
No fear of coming fate could make me sad
If so, to-night, I held my little lad."

"If you could choose," he said, "a royal boon,
Like that girl dancing yonder for the king,
What gift from all her kingdom would you bid
Obedient Fortune in her hand to bring?"
The dancer's robe, the glittering banquet hall,
Swam in a mist of tears along the wall;
"Not power," she said, "nor riches, nor delight,
But just to kiss my little lad to-night!"

"Hedged In;"

OR, THE LIMITATIONS OF LIFE.

A SERMON

BY THE REV. JOSEPH WOOD.

Job iii. 23. "Hedged in."

Few things are more beautiful than the hedge-row of a country lane in the early days of June. The snowy hawthorn blossoms above loading the air with the sweetest, most refreshing fragrance; the wild flowers beneath that grow under the protection of its generous life; the birds' nests that may be found sheltered where its thorns are thickest, make such a hedge-row a study and a delight. There the naturalist finds his treasures and the artist a subject for his canvas. The wayfarer rests in its shade, while the child rejoices in it as in a storehouse of wonders. How much of the beauty of our English landscape depends on its hedge-rows, tall, tangled, flowing, overgrown. The canny Scot and the thrifty Frenchman condemn them as wasteful and slovenly compared with their own stone walls, and indeed, scientific farming quite disapproves them, but for all that who would exchange the English hedge-row, even though it is a little wasteful, for the grim, grey, barren, uninviting stone fences of France or Scotland? Long be

the day before scientific farming cuts down our hedges.

And yet these beautiful hedge-rows with their wealth of life and blossom are all of them barriers, restrictions, limitations. Themselves so freely growing they check the freedom of the wandering cattle, they forbid our entrance upon the fields within, and warn the traveller that he must not stray from the appointed road. They were planted neither to please the eye nor delight the soul, but as restrictions upon liberty, as barriers against wandering, as a protection against intruders. Yet these very restrictions, barriers, limitations are themselves beautiful. Which things are a parable.

Human life has its hedge-rows; it is full of restrictions and limitations against which we often kick and rebel, desiring a larger freedom. There are barriers to the right of us and barriers to the left of us, which we may not, cannot overpass. Yet these barriers are not necessarily hard and repulsive. They may be like the dividing fences in France, stiff, stony, angular; or they may be like our English hedge-rows, full of sweet blossoms, lovely growths, and the songs and enchantments of pairing birds. The restrictions which at first seem to narrow our freedom and to be something to rebel against, turn out to be themselves beautiful and full of benediction.

What hedges we plant about our children to shield them from harm. Home itself, with its rules, habits, and economies, which children have to observe, is a hedge-row. It restrains and restricts. Yet how sweet and fragrant are the hedge-rows of home, full of roses as well as prickly thorns. The very limitations they impose are big with blessings. The mother's arms around the new-born babe are a hedge, but how soft and lovely is her clasp of her child. All the "musts" and "must-nots" of early years, all the rules and regulations of the nursery, the schoolroom and the playground, are hedges, fencing in the child from this danger and that.

As we grow up we are let out into wider pastures; nevertheless the hedges are there. The customs of society, public opinion, the necessity of earning our daily bread, the care of the household, to say nothing of the law of the land, are all barriers which shut us up within definite lines, limiting our freedom, and are yet in themselves, in course of time, sources of delight.

All the way, up from the lowest to the highest, there are limitations, and no man, however placed, on whatever vantage ground of wealth or privilege, is free to do as he pleases. However powerful, however self-willed, he finds himself checked here and checked there. There are bounds he cannot pass. Not even a proud Kaiser, patronising in his public speeches the Almighty, finds that he can kick against the pricks with impunity. Only to a limited extent is man a free agent. He would fly with the eagle, but he is restricted to walking. He would be in two places at once, but Nature forbids. He would work the entire twenty-four hours in the day in building up a fortune or pursuing a study, but the necessities of sleep and rest restrict his labours. He would undo the past, but the past is locked up in an impenetrable safe of which no man has the key. There are limitations everywhere. We are "hedged-in."

Job complains of this. He reproaches God for giving him life; life which he cannot understand; life in which, because of the limitations of his faculties, he can see no design, no aim, no clear and noble intention; life where, whatever the path of enquiry or action on which he sets out, before he has taken many steps he finds a barrier which he can neither climb or pass. He thinks that if it was worth while giving him life at all, it ought to have been given with a wider scope. But God has "hedged" him in so that he cannot stir, cannot even see a path out of his miseries and perplexities? Conscious of the limitations of life, faculty, and condition, he complains bitterly, and indulges in more than one impatient fling at God.

Like Job, we too are hedged in by limitations, and my purpose is to shew how, irksome as they are, they yet carry within themselves benedictions.

We may find an illustration of this by considering the powers of the eye and the ear. Both these organs are severely restricted in their scope. We do not see all there is to see, we do not hear all there is to hear. We do not see the seven colours in a beam of light until we call in the spectroscope. We do not hear the

sap flowing in the trees, nor the beating of the squirrel's heart. There are vibrations which produce sounds too low down, as there are others which produce sounds too high up for us to hear. If we could hear all the sounds of Nature we should be deafened by them; the sap in the trees would sound as the roar of mighty streams of traffic. If we could see all we should be blinded by excess of light. The colours of sunset and the dawn are beautiful to us by reason that we do not see the whole that there is in light. We listen to a fine orchestra, yet if our ears were acute enough to catch all the sounds given off by all the instruments there would be no pleasure at all. The limitations of the eye and the ear make the landscape and the symphony charming to us. The limitations are also sources of beauty.

There are many ways by which human beings are "hedged-in,"—sickness, a crippled body, a hard lot, poverty, painful duty. Such limitations, however, do not apply to everybody. Let us consider those which are universal.

I. Men are limited in their knowledge of God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou discover the Almighty to perfection?" We know something of God, enough for love and obedience, but we do not know Him "unto perfection,"—that is completely, fully, perfectly.

Is it wonderful that we cannot see all of God if we cannot see all of light and hear all of sound? What we do see and know blesses us; but what are all our thoughts of God, all the revelations of prophet and poet, of inspired seer and devout saint, of church and Bible, but "broken lights of Thee, and Thou, O God, art more than they?"

But this very limitation teaches the vast lessons of trust and reverence. We bow before a Greatness, a Grandeur, and a Goodness, of which we have a thousand hints and rays, but which we can no more compass with our thought than we can compass time and space. That unbounded life, that immeasurable totality of Being in which all things are held, and which is suggested by the starry heavens, and the leafy forest, and the innumerable sparkles of the moving sea, and the stately march of the seasons, and the world of throbbing human love, and the voices that sound in trumpet-tones the laws of right and mercy across the page of history,—that Life, that Being, out of whose treasuries come forth storm and sunshine, wisdom and grace, dawn and youth, hope and renewal,—that all-embracing Eternal Life of which I am a part, as a tiny ray is part of the sun,—that Life we cannot measure nor understand,—how does the thought of it fill us with humility, with a sense that we are not our own, that woe is upon us if we break the universal order. We are limited in our knowledge of God; but in that limitation lies the trust and reverence of the child-like heart, the reverence and the faith that looks up and trusts a Greater and a Better and a Wiser than itself, the reverence which comes of a sense of dependence. And how lovely is such reverence. The hedge is beautiful!

II. We know not the future. There is a vulgar curiosity about the future which finds solace in Zadkiel's almanacs and other quackeries. There is a pious anxiety about the future which is troubled for its children, or for the life of some dear one, or for the prosperity of a cause, or for the welfare of the world. We stand at the cross roads where various paths of action meet, and ask "Which is our duty?" And in our perplexity we say, "Oh! that we could see what the result will be!" But our eyes are holden. Question and gaze as we may, we know not what to-morrow will bring forth. We are only sure of one thing—that it is often the unlooked for and unexpected which will happen. We lament our limit of vision. We think we could order our lives with much greater wisdom, that we could secure for ourselves much greater safety could we read the future.

Yet what a blessing is the limitation. The chances are that if we could read the future it would only unnerve and unman us. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Every day has evil enough for all the strength a man can put forth. The knowledge of the future, with its cares and sorrows, would not help you to bear them better when they come, and, I fear, would rob to-day of its hope and vitality. It would be the highest unwisdom to load the present with the future, since the present has enough to do with its own proper concerns. We have always strength enough to bear evil when it comes. We have not strength enough to bear its anticipation. The limitation is a blessing. The hedge is beautiful.

III. We cannot cut ourselves off from the past. We are born under certain conditions, with certain influences in our blood, with certain inherited tendencies of race, lineage, culture, habit, some of which perhaps have hindered us all our days. You are limited by some hereditary burden. A dull brain it may be, or some weak organ in the body, or some outlaw passion in your temperament, the brute in the family blood that ought to have been tamed by your grandfather. Who would not have prevented this if he could? Who would not alter it? Who would not have made himself a little brighter in wit, a little healthier in body, a little stronger in will, if his opinion had been asked at the right time? How many of us who are forty years old but have ached in the same spot where our mothers ached, and because they did, and have been able from that aching to predict afar off which of the wheels of life would probably be the one to stop first, and to stop all the rest. Nature limits us by the past. She measures out to us our spoonful of existence, nor ever asks us whether we would like it in a golden or earthenware goblet, never consults us as to the kind of ancestors we would like to have had, does not permit us to choose our own grandparents.

We have received so much that seems a hindrance to us, that we sometimes think it would have been better if God had sent children into the world without fathers or mothers, if each child could have been made direct by God, as the mythical Adam, without any influences from the past in the blood and brain at all. We are conscious that, do what we will, we cannot cut ourselves loose from the past.

Of the thousand things to be said on that subject one must now suffice, namely, the overwhelming and inestimable good we have received from the past far outbalancing any evil. We do not object to the *benefits* we inherit from our ancestors. It was not in our boyhood that our education began by which we have been trained to habits of industry, truthfulness, generosity, and self-control. Whatever virtue is ours is ours partly because it has come from the moral discipline of a long line of upright ancestors. Much of our good would never have been possible to us but for the virtue of preceding generations. The good we have received by inheritance is far more than the evil. Inheritance is a limitation, but it is also an enrichment. The hedge is beautiful. That of which we complain carries with it some of the most far-reaching blessings of human life.

IV. We cannot change the conditions of life, the laws that attach pain and misery to wrong-doing, the moral order that brings punishment on every sin and doomsday to every folly. We would, if we could, break the connection between wrong and pain; we desire a freer world where we can act as we please and the consequences will not be as they are here. We are hedged in by these moral restraints. For still "as a man sows so shall he reap." Still it is joy to the just to do judgment, and still "the way of transgressors is hard." The conditions of life cannot be changed. Men are bruising their hands as against iron bars, the iron bars of the moral law; men are dashing their heads as against stone walls, the stone walls of cause and effect, all in vain. We are limited. We want our fling without the penalty; we think *we* can sin and yet somehow escape the consequences. But the stars in their courses fight against Sisera. The constitution of the world does not make for evil but for good. Never can we defy the least of the moral laws and escape the penalty.

But how good it is that men are thus hedged in. What anarchy, what wreck and ruin there would be without the sway and dominion of this immutable righteousness. The hedge is beautiful. It is full of thorns, sharp and fierce as daggers, for those who try to break through; it is full of flowers and fragrance for those who walk in the paths marked out by it. All the glory of life is born of the fact that there is that which in spite of ten thousand obstacles makes for righteousness. It is a restriction, it forbids wandering; forbids greed, cruelty, selfishness, injustice; forbids lust, vanity and pride; it is a barrier—we are hedged in. But the barrier itself is beautiful. For while it forbids on the one hand it helps on the other, helps noble endeavour, willing self-sacrifice, God-like character. No, we cannot change the moral law, nor would we.

Stern Lawgiver! yet dost thou wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient heavens through thee are
fresh and strong.

Nor can we think of the limitations of life without remembering the pains, sicknesses, sorrows, troubles, which, sooner or later, come upon us and hedge us in. Some dear, noble soul, that might have done so much and filled a great sphere, is shut up within the narrow walls of a bedroom, there to suffer and wait. Some heart, capable of much, is limited by bodily weakness. The hedges for them are full of thorns. But the hedges are also teeming with flower-life and bird-life, and suffering itself contains the element of the highest happiness. Suffering, rightly used, is not a cramping, narrowing, restricting of the soul, but its enriching and enlarging.

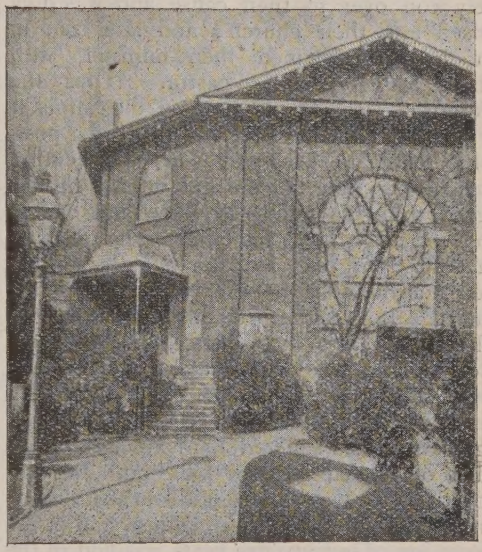
The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.

Oh! how many battered cottages have thus let in the light. You, dear heart, art called to suffer much. Bereavement has left you poor and sad; some concurrence of evil conditions has brought upon you undeserved reproach; you are misunderstood; you are hedged in by poverty; you are restricted to a narrow round of drudgery by your want of education or opportunity; or you have some bodily deformity which hinders you in the race, so that always others press on before you; or you have some thorn in the flesh which is sharp and painful and hinders your influence. What hedges are these! And yet, and yet, the hedges burst into blossom, and these hard conditions have hidden in them a blessed ministry. You are learning patience and teaching it. You are being refined and becoming a refining influence.

Let us own the sharpest smart
Which human patience may endure,
Pays light for that which leaves the heart
More generous, dignified, and pure.

Sunday service is not a substitute for good living, but a help to it; and the worship of the Father, which is in spirit and in truth, is no mere matter of an hour: it runs through the whole seven days; it makes the world a temple, and all life a divine service.—*Dr. Charles G. Ames.*

Our Ancient Chapels.



XIV.—Adrian Street, Dover.

The congregation worshipping in this building is of general Baptist origin and dates back probably to 1643. In that year Baptist preachers came into Dover and were welcomed into the house of Dame Anne Stevens. Amongst the first converts who rewarded their labours was one Nicolas Woodman, and he in turn began to gather a congregation. Richard Hobbs and Edward Prescott became the first co-pastors of the new cause, and its first place of meeting was in Last Lane. It prospered for a time and was let alone, but with the Restoration came persecution. Hobbs was put into prison, the congregation was expelled from the building, and a lock was placed on the door by the mayor. They had therefore to hold their services in secret, sometimes surprised by discovery and imprisonment, and they bore one another's burdens in a bravely Christian spirit.

But an unexpected champion now appears upon the scene. Captain Samuel Taverner, who had commanded a troop of horse in the Civil War, was appointed by Oliver Cromwell governor of Deal Castle. During various visits

to Dover in discharge of official duties, he grew interested in the persecuted Baptists, was ultimately won over to their cause and was duly baptised into their church; and later on, in 1681, he was ordained their minister, with Richard Cannon as co-pastor. Thus the Governor of Deal Castle became the minister of a humble Baptist Chapel—a far harder post, as he found to his cost. For persecution pounced upon him fiercely and often; he was dragged from his pulpit by force and hauled before the magistrates, his crime being unlawful preaching. On one occasion his goods were seized and he was in other ways continually harassed. But neither penalties nor sufferings could affright him into silence, and in 1692, under an Act of Indulgence, a license was allowed to use the south end of his house as a meeting place for public service. For eleven long years he had suffered hardship as a good soldier of Christ, and for four more he now enjoyed with his people undisturbed peace; then he won at last the warrior's rest, and at the veteran age of seventy-five years was laid in the Baptist burial ground where a monument was later erected to this faithful preacher of the word.

John and David Simpson next shared the duties of pastor and kept the congregation together. From 1725 to 1759 Robert Pyall, of Tenterden, ministered with increasing esteem, and during his pastorate a second chapel was built, 1745 being its date.

A break in the records hides the next twenty years, but in 1781 Stephen Philpott and William Ashdown were ordained to the congregation, arrangements being made at the same time for both monthly communion and a discipline meeting. The former stayed for ten years and then moved to Saffron Walden; the latter until his resignation in 1795, after which he continued on as a member of the congregation until his death in 1810. William Ashdown was a man of character, a liberal preacher, and an author, but his work in disproof of Satan was a little before its time.

In 1792 a converted Wesleyan preacher, James Porter, had been appointed co-pastor, but proved a failure; and in 1793 the chapel was enlarged.

With the new century the Dover community entered upon a brighter chapter in its history. Benjamin Marten, of Headcorn, was prevailed upon to take up the work, which he did in 1800, and for the next twenty-three years he laboured with devotion and success. He held high views of the pastoral office and steadily increased the number of members. So great was the increase as to necessitate a new church, which was opened on the 2nd May, 1820, William Johnson Fox preaching one of the opening sermons. The old chapel was sold for £300 and afterwards demolished into its original bricks. Three years after the new chapel was built it received into No. 3 vault the body of Benjamin Marten, whose death was a great grief to the congregation and whose life was an example of real devotion.

George Culmer Pound, who had been assistant to Mr. Marten, now ministered to the congregation alone until 1841. He was followed, first by John Atkinson Briggs, and then by John Lettis Short, each staying but three years.

They were succeeded by the Rev. Thomas B. Briggs, whose ministry extended over thirty-five years, and was full of good works right up to its sudden close at a Communion Service in his own church. His death, in 1883, will be remembered by many, and his name was a household one in Dover, for he was a public-spirited, kind-hearted, and gifted minister.

The remaining story concerns to-day. The Rev. Thomas Robinson, now at Hale, in Cheshire, became minister in 1884, and was followed by the Rev. John Kennard four years later.

In 1892 the chapel was closed for six months, but reopened under the Rev. S. Burrows, who still carries on the cause. During his zealous ministry the congregation has shewn healthy vitality and activity, improving the chapel, founding a Sunday School, helping the cause at Deal, organising a Band of Hope, Guild of Good Fellowship, and other social work, and entertaining the Provincial Assembly. May continued success attend their labours!

F. K. F.

There is a little plant called Reverence in a corner of my Soul's garden, which I love to have watered about once a week.—*O. W. Holmes.*

Impressions of the Passion Play.

We took Dr. Lunn's tickets by which we secured, between the fatigue of travelling and the excitement of Ober-Ammergau, a quiet week at Garmisch, under the shadow of the mighty Zug-Spitze. Garmisch is a lovely village in the heart of the Bavarian Highlands, and it was a stroke of genius on Dr. Lunn's part arranging a few days' sojourn there as a preparation for the Passion Play. A more picturesque spot could scarcely be found in all the Alps. Whether for natural beauty or domestic architecture Ober-Ammergau is not in it with Garmisch. Every house is a picture and every street a panorama. Set in a little plain, surrounded by great peaks where the snow still lingers in a hundred hollows, and the waterfalls plunge headlong into great gorges, and mountain streams make their music day and night, Garmisch is just the place to bring the mind into tune with the best things.

* * * *

As no one can obtain a ticket for the play who does not stay two nights in the village, or at least *pay for* two nights' lodging, we arrived at Ober-Ammergau on the Friday afternoon in readiness for Sunday's performance. The letting of lodgings is just the one little harvest of the individual villager, the profits from the play being devoted to public works, such as roads, schools, etc. And seeing that the play is only given once in ten years, and that during the rest of the time the rooms which have been built and furnished for visitors are vacant, it is not unreasonable to secure for the villagers some modest return. The members of our party were comfortably located and have nothing but grateful appreciation to express for the kindness and attention of their Ober-Ammergau hosts. We lodged with one Simon—*not* the tanner, but one of the money changers in the Temple, and his pretty looking daughter, one of the attendants on *Mary*, waited upon us. Yet it must be confessed that the first impression of Ober-Ammergau is distinctly disappointing. "The world is too much with us." There is too much buying and selling, too many wine shops, too many glaring advertisements, too much noise and bustle to make a fit atmosphere for all the solemnities and sanctities of the Passion. It was also a little upsetting to see *Nicodemus* weighing out groceries, and *Simon Peter* in the corner of a cafe reading his newspaper over a tankard of beer, and *John*, with his long hair and beautiful face, behind a counter, bargaining about the price of an elaborately-carved crucifix. One began to wonder whether the village folk had not lost their simplicity and reverence, and whether the whole thing were not besmeared with the slime of money making. A little thought, however, soon removed part of the unfavourable impression. Eight thousand people could not pour themselves into that mountain village, twice a week through a long summer, without a vast and quite necessary expenditure, involving a considerable trade. The buying and selling, the noise and bustle, the business air of the place, are the inevitable accompaniment of the eagerness of the outside public to witness a performance so unique and renowned. Before we left the wonder grew that the people had been so little spoiled by the publicity and traffic thrust upon them. Still the play is for them a labour of love, a religious service, an offering of devotion. With whatever misgivings one may walk about the streets of Ober-Ammergau before the play, when it is over one is lost in admiration of the perfect taste, the quiet reserve, the admirable simplicity, and the fine dignity of the representation. There is not a jarring note nor incongruous gesture during the long day's effort. All is subdued, refined, devout, full of poetry, realistic indeed, yet not taken out of the ideal, and one comes away softened, chastened, uplifted, with no desire to talk but just to keep silence in a lonely walk among the hills.

* * * *

Imagine a bare, plain, huge room, containing an audience of 4000 people, seated on a stepped floor, rising tier above tier halfway to the roof. Imagine the end wall knocked out, leaving the stage open to sky and mountains, and you have the Ober-Ammergau Theatre. The play was formerly given in the churchyard, with no shelter from the weather either for audience or performers. When the churchyard became too narrow, a building was erected upon the present site, with a roof over a few of the more favoured seats. The profits of the performances in 1890 have been devoted to completing the building, and for the first time all the seats are covered in.

"MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS."

The action takes place on a great stage, on which a crowd of 700 people can be easily manœuvred. There is only one set scene—a large hall in a thoroughfare of Jerusalem, with a street running on either side, having at the corner of one the house of Pilate, and at the corner of the other the house of Annas, the High Priest. The story of the Passion depicted on the stage begins with the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, seated on an ass, with the shouting multitude, the children singing their hosannahs, and the disciples casting down their palm-branches. There are in all seventeen acts, or chapters, and some of the acts have as many as seven scenes. Each act is preceded by a chorus of Guardian Angels, leading up to tableaux of some Old Testament scenes, supposed to be typical of the action to follow. The *Choragus*, or leader of the choir, a post filled this year by Joseph Mayer, the *Christus* of 1890, first recites some verses, then the choir burst into song, accompanied by a small but efficient orchestra, hidden from view in front of the stage. The tinkle of a little bell is heard, and the singers draw back so as to reveal the tableaux. The curtain rises, and the tableau is seen arranged inside the hall, during which the singing is continued. The curtain falls, the choir resume their places, and the singing proceeds. Then when they come to the end of the music, the choir file off to the right and left and the action begins. This occurs seventeen times, occupying quite one-half of the time, and although only incidental to the play itself is really a most important feature of the representation. The various tableaux are arranged with great skill and taste, several of them being taken from world-renowned pictures. The music is quaint, old-fashioned in character, with a touch of Haydn in its taking melodies and simple harmonies, yet far more suitable for the special occasion than the more majestic numbers of the great musicians. The choir consists of about

forty voices, admirably trained, who although only simple villagers, move on and off the stage with all the dignity of kings and queens. Their robes, made in the village, are exquisite both in form and colour, and produce a brilliant effect. Twice, however, the coloured garments are exchanged for black—immediately before and immediately after the crucifixion. As already indicated, the spoken parts are allotted to Joseph Mayer, while the musical portion is led by Jacob Rutz, the blacksmith of the village. The solos are given by members of the choir in turn, and are not so effective as the chorus singing.

* * * *

But the play is the thing, and what shall be said of that? Perhaps it is enough to say that one expected to be disappointed and was not. To begin with, the acting has the absolutely necessary artistic reserve for such a subject. There is no mouthing, no strutting, no addressing the audience, no attempt at individual display. Even the scenes of clamour on the part of the crowd, and Mary's outbursts of irrepressible grief, are subdued in tone, and probably on that account all the more impressive. There was not a dry eye in all the vast audience at the parting of *Jesus* from *Mary*, and yet the action was of the simplest and quietest possible on so great a stage. The great burden of the piece falls on *Jesus*, allotted for the first time to Anton Lang, who two years ago took the part of *John*. It is a most difficult part to carry through, requiring many qualities not often found in combination: a dignified presence, a persuasive voice, a speaking face, a rapt, yet simple manner, and, above all, true, devout feeling. It can be said of Anton Lang that he looks the part to perfection; that all his movements are with grace and dignity; that he imparts to the character the spiritual atmosphere without which the representation would be painful, and that if he fails to touch the deepest chords of the story, as in the Gethsemane scene, it is largely because such scenes could not receive on the stage an adequate interpretation, even at the hands of the highest genius and most finished actor. But think of the part taken by a wood-carver in the Bavarian highlands!

"ANTON LANG, THE CHRISTUS OF 1900.

Next to *Jesus* in point of difficulty is the part of *Judas*, finely taken by Johann Zwink, a house painter. The part of *Mary* is filled by Anna Flunger, a postman's daughter, and the important part of *Caiaphas* by the verger of the church. The disciples, rabbis, and other parts, are taken by men who off the stage are carpenters, masons, bakers, potters, tailors, etc. Altogether, including choir, orchestra, and children, nearly 700 persons, all of them inhabitants of a village with a total population under 1400, take part in the performance. Not an outsider is allowed to share in the slighest degree at the sacred task. Every member of the band and chorus is village born and taught. If the village at the time of the performance does not happen to possess an oboi player or second flute, the part is omitted rather than import a stranger. Concerning all this a word later on. It is of the general impression made on the spectators by the play that one is anxious to know. Of course, in so vast an audience, made up of a dozen nationalities, and drawn from a score of different churches, the impressions carried away will not be anything like uniform. Yet, taken as a whole, it would seem that people feel as if they had been attending a religious service of a very remarkable and moving character. The silence and intense attention of the audience is itself a strong testimony to the power of the great and unique story as set forth on the stage. No one would come to scoff, but there is no doubt many take their seats as at a theatre only, just to see a fine spectacle and to gratify a certain curiosity aroused by the wide renown of Ober-Ammergau. It is not too much to say that they go away with something better than a gratified curiosity. For a little while, at least, they are chastened and uplifted. They have been made to feel the reality of the great human drama, of which the cross is the eternal symbol. The story that transformed the world has in briefest pageant lived and moved before their eyes. Worldly and *blasé* they entered the theatre, but they do not leave it without having been touched to finer issues.

That certainly is the general effect. In particular it may be noticed that as the story moves on to its *denouement* the Christ is more and more humanised. It is not a God who lives and moves and dies on the stage. It is a man. The idea that a God could pass through those various experiences becomes impossible, as they are realised for us in living pictures. Jesus is brought out of the realm of theology into that of human life. It is not the unfolding of a story of supernatural significance we are watching, but the everlasting drama of the human heart as it suffers for truth and love, and by suffering cleanses and redeems whomsoever its light irradiates and its pathos moves. There are those who are so impressed by the humanising process of the story as to regret seeing it, and to go away with disapproval. This Jesus is not the Christ of the creeds, but just the Christ who trod the Syrian fields with human feet, and felt for men with a human heart.

* * * *

Could such a representation of the Passion be given in England? Certainly not, and for many reasons. We have not the atmosphere, environment, and traditions. It would be hard to find in England a whole village possessed with the devout faith of these Bavarian peasants, and if the faith could be found, the artistic temperament and training, the culture and ability would be entirely wanting. It may be doubted whether one of our large towns could furnish a company of actors taken from the ranks of the common people, or indeed from any section of the community, capable of impersonating the Gospel characters with such beauty, dignity, refinement, and reverence. The thing, perhaps, that strikes one most forcibly is that a band of villagers should achieve such an artistic triumph. In no theatre in England can be seen a series of stage pictures so beautifully managed as at Ober-Ammergau. It is not that there is nothing to criticise. An experienced stage manager would suggest more than one alteration. It is possible to find fault here and there, yet the final impression is of wonder and admiration. How come these villagers by all this talent and artistic perception? Are they of a different breed from the rest of men? Is it explained by their Roman Catholicism? Why then does not Roman Catholicism achieve the same result elsewhere? Putting aside the noble traditions of the village, and the simple faith and reverence of the villagers—important factors in the result—we arrive at one conclusion, the people have

culture. They are mostly wood carvers by trade. Although Ober-Ammergau is a remote village in a mountainous country, "far from the madding crowd," it has its art school, its music school, its concert room, its public library, its municipal life, its freedom from abject poverty. Its inhabitants have solved the problem of "plain living and high thinking." "What a revelation it is," says Mr. Stead, in words which may well close these impressions, "of the mine of latent capacity, musical, dramatic, intellectual, in the human race, that a single mountain village can furnish, under a capable guidance, with adequate inspiration, such a host competent to set forth such a play from its common folk. It is not native capacity that is lacking to mankind. It is a guiding brain, the patient love, the careful education, and the stimulus and inspiration of a great idea. But given these, every village of country yokels from Dorset to Caithness might develop artists as noble and as devoted as those of Ober-Ammergau."—J.W.

Religious Instruction in Elementary Schools.

A PAPER READ AT A MINISTERS' MEETING BY A LAYMAN.

It is common knowledge that in this country two systems of Elementary Education are recognised and supported by the State, the Board School and the so-called Voluntary system. I need not now go into the development of these two systems as their history is sufficiently well known. How much longer the Voluntary system will continue is a matter of opinion, but there can be scarcely any doubt that the no very distant future will see the extinction of the Voluntary system *as we know it*, and the provision of Elementary Education practically controlled by popularly elected authorities. I think I may also say that such a change would be welcomed by a large proportion of the present supporters of the system if under the local authority distinctive religious instruction could be secured. In short there can be no doubt that it is the religious question that has kept the voluntary system alive. Its alleged economy has been used for all it is worth, and with great effect, but has never been the real reason for its existence. Having said this much as to the importance of religious instruction in relation to one great division of our Elementary school system, let us for a moment look at the position which religious instruction occupies to-day in our Elementary School system viewed as a whole. We may divide opinion on the subject into three classes.

(*a*) Those who demand distinctive religious teaching in their own creed as necessary (these are the upholders of the Voluntary system and are chiefly represented by the Church of England and the Roman Catholics).

(*b*) Those who believe that sufficient instruction can be given in the elements of the Christian religion without introducing dogmas peculiar to different sects, and that a compromise is possible. This class is mainly represented by Nonconformists and supports the School Board system.

(*c*) Those who believe in the entire separation of religious and secular instruction, and consider it no part of the duty of the State to provide it, The last of these positions is the most logical, but inasmuch as religious instruction of some sort or other is provided in all Elementary schools in this country (whether Voluntary or Board) we may take it that on the whole this is what the public desire.

Between the position taken up by the Voluntary and the Board School partisans on this question there is little to choose. Broadly speaking one represents the Church of England and the other Nonconformists, and both parties are using public money for more or less sectarian purposes. Indeed the whole position of religious instruction, to those who feel its importance, could scarcely be more unsatisfactory than it is. On the one hand we have the Church of England blocking all educational reform that would seem to threaten her right to teach (in schools almost entirely supported by the State) her own special dogmas, and on the other hand we see School Board elections fought, not on questions of purely educational importance, but on the teaching of certain evangelical dogmas that have succeeded in getting a majority by the precarious means of the cumulative vote. This, very briefly, is the present position of religious instruction in our elementary schools. What

will be its ultimate development is not very difficult to foresee. Unless some way out of the difficulty can be found religious instruction will disappear altogether from the school curriculum and purely secular subjects will alone be taught. It is because I feel that this would be a most serious calamity, and because the present is the time to avert it, if averted it can be, that I venture to shadow forth the lines on which this may, I believe, be done, and the place which religious instruction should hold in the future. To begin with we must, I think, accept the view that it is not the duty of the local educational authority or the State to provide in any way for religious instruction; but *that it is their duty to make proper provision for it in the time table*, and *that such time should be reckoned as part of the instruction given at the school although probably carried on in a separate building*.. Proper registers would have to be kept of attendances at classes for religious instruction, and every child above a certain age would either have to attend one such class, or failing that attend during the same time at school to receive secular instruction. The second proposition I have to make is that the various religious bodies should be expected to make all necessary provision for this religious instruction. What might not be done if only they would take it in hand and infuse life and reality into what is too often merely a form to be got through with as quickly as possible! But, it will be asked, how can it be done? Well, to make such an arrangement practicable I would propose that instead of the present plan of devoting half-an-hour or less every morning to religious instruction, one whole morning during the week (other than Saturday morning) should be set apart for this purpose. On such mornings the children would assemble at the different classes for religious instruction, just as they do now on Sundays for Sunday School. Proper registers would have to be kept, and attendances marked in them would count for all purposes for which attendances are reckoned, just as if made at school. No teacher employed by the school authority would be compelled to give instruction, but many, probably the majority, would volunteer to do so; and it would certainly be advisable to stipulate that they should attend for the purpose of maintaining order and discipline. The school authority would have power to insist that the buildings in which religious instruction was given were structurally fit for the purpose, and complied with the regulations from time to time in force with regard to school buildings. Sufficient time would be allowed to bring buildings up to date, or build new ones, and during that time temporary arrangements could be made to utilise the ordinary school buildings, dividing the accommodation between the various churches as fairly as possible. After the lapse of a certain number of years religious bodies would be expected to find the necessary buildings. Should the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, or any other religious body hand over to a School Board a school belonging to them, arrangements could be made to allow such religious body, in consideration of doing so, always to use the building for purposes of religious instruction on the morning set apart for that object. Any religious body could demand to have a class for religious instruction, recognised by the school authority, provided not less than say twenty children were prepared to attend it. The decision as to which class a child would attend would rest with its parents or guardians. The school inspector would visit classes for religious instruction and report:—(*a*) as to the suitability of the building in which they were held; (*b*) as to whether proper order and discipline were maintained; (*c*) as to whether the hours set apart for such instruction were adhered to; but he would have no power to interfere with the instruction given. In case of a school authority refusing for any reason to recognise a class for religious instruction, and any dispute arising from this, or any other cause, the County Education Authority could be appealed to, and if they failed to settle the matter then the Board of Education, whose decision would be final.

I will not attempt now to anticipate the many objections that are certain to be raised to these proposals. I quite expect to be told that they are impracticable. May I, before closing, briefly point out a few of the advantages. I think such a settlement, if given a fair trial, would be a permanent one, as it would be eminently just and fair. I cannot but think that it should result in a substantial improvement in the quality of the religious instruction given. No

doubt in many instances this is done with care and thoroughness, but I believe it might be vastly improved if religious bodies were made, as I think they ought, directly responsible for it. Cleryymen and ministers would be able to give far more time and attention to such classes than they can to the Sunday School, coming as it does in the hurry of Sunday work. It ought to be no difficult matter to secure sufficient teachers, as in all probability the school teachers would gladly volunteer their services. They would not, as they now so often do, feel that they were being worked out of hours when taking a class in a Sunday School. Then, again, subscriptions given to Voluntary schools would be, to some extent, set free for aiding in the provision for these week-morning religious classes, and there may be many, like myself, who would gladly give to such an object although unable to subscribe to the present Voluntary school system. But above and beyond all else such a settlement as I have attempted to describe will lift this important question into a new atmosphere, secure from the wranglings of politicians and the utterly uncongenial surroundings of the ballot box.*

Letter from a Ministerial Nephew.

FREE SPEECH.

Dear Uncle Phil,—Your prompt and frank reply to my inquiry touching the problem of being "old at fifty" places me under a fresh obligation to you, and in fact awakens in me that kind of gratitude which has been accurately defined as a lively sense of favours to come.

Seriously speaking, I fully appreciate not only your reassuring words as to the prospect of parsonic middle life, but also your golden counsels—veritable "rules of the road for those who would arrive at the goal"—difficult as it is to put them into practice.

I have taken the liberty of sorting out from among these hints such as I fancy you intended for my especial consumption—not that I'm going to say which these are—and I promise to bear them in mind to the best of my ability.

To-day I want to invoke your opinion on the right of a minister to touch in his sermons upon highly debatable questions of the hour, on which he knows the views of his congregation to be divided.

This is what makes me anxious to have your counsel: The other day I went to pay a call on one of our most highly respected members, a gentleman of great sweetness and courtesy, and in the course of conversation he told me that he could not help regretting that I had not availed myself of my right of free speech to condemn from my pulpit "this cruel, unjust, and abominable war."

Now you will observe that, to begin with, my friend simply took it for granted that I shared his views concerning the war: whereas —— but I need not pursue this theme, suffice it to say that my name did not appear at the foot of a certain memorial. But what I want to put to you is this, do *you* think I have neglected any part of my duty in not expressing in my sermons my views, whatever they may be, regarding this subject? As I did in my last letter, so I will in this, pending the arrival of your answer, just state the principles which have guided me in my course of action—or inaction, if you choose to call it so. I am a believer in Free Speech, and proud to occupy a free pulpit; but I conceive that my congregation invited me to that position, not in order to have my instruction on politics, but primarily that I might lead their devotions and give such help to them as I am able in the deepening of the spiritual life and in making more real the realities of the Spirit. Rightly or wrongly they think that a special gift, cultivated by special training, enables me to do this, but it does not at all enter their minds, so far as I am aware, to attribute to me any special political insight, or to my judgments on political questions any particular value. In theology—and even in religion—I am supposed to be what for want of a better name may be called a specialist; but on a topic like this one, of our government's action in South Africa, how am I better qualified to arrive at a verdict than any member of my congregation? The whole question is particularly thorny, even on the simplest matters of fact directly contradictory statements are made with equal emphasis, and if I have arrived at convictions of my own—not without many searchings

* The Editor does not endorse all the opinions and suggestions in the above paper, but is glad to make room for so thoughtful a contribution to the discussion of a difficult question.

of heart—yet what right have I, in my official capacity, to obtrude them upon men and women equally candid, equally penetrative, and perhaps of totally opposite opinion? Would it be wise to do so, would it even be fair? I hold that I am consulting the best interests of the Church by observing silence upon a matter where agreement seems hopeless. I consider that in a crisis like the present there remains to the preacher a sufficient choice of subjects by treating which he will not provoke bitter animosities and accentuate antagonisms; and I would, lastly, urge that the right of free speech must include that of free silence.

But this whole idea of free speech seems to me to have been woefully misunderstood by some of our friends, and twisted into something which it was never intended to mean, viz., Pulpit Tyranny. No one wishes the minister to surrender any of the rights of citizenship, to abstain from freely expressing his thoughts on debatable questions; but he must exercise that right where he can be answered—not where answer or contradiction are out of the question, to wit, in the pulpit. If he elects to do the latter he lays himself open to the charge of clerical arrogance, he abuses, as I think, his position, he breaks a trust. I wonder what my friend, and those who think with him, would have said had I at any time obeyed his solicitations and preached in favour of the war! The truth appears to me to be that this clamour for "Free Speech" is merely a claim to be allowed to air *our* opinions, especially if they are obnoxious to others, without a corresponding readiness to let those others express theirs. I for one have not so learnt the meaning of freedom.

There, Uncle Phil, you have my confession; as always, I am willing to be corrected and to be convinced that a right view of duty should have led me to act differently. I only hope that I am not troubling you too much with laying these difficulties of mine before you, and that you will not end by telling me, as another young man was told by another sage, to have done with propounding riddles, and leave off asking questions, lest worse should befall me.

Believe me,

Your affectionate nephew,

ROBERT MANCOLL.

From Uncle Phil in Reply.

No, my dear Bob, it won't do; that is to say if you have the slightest tincture of the prophet in your blood and brain, it won't do. What you say sounds extremely plausible, and is, at the present moment, extremely popular, "but yet," as Gretchen says, "there is something out of gear in it." In fact, I suspect you are not very satisfied with your own argument, for your letter lacks that hearty confidence with which you generally write. Does it not strike you that in defining your own pulpit powers and position you have made a most curious omission? I am, you say, an expert in Theology, and an expert in Religion. Is that all? Surely the preacher is also an expert in Ethics. What is he in the pulpit for if not to lift up the ethical standards which so often are dragged by men in the mire. It is his business to help men busily engaged in the world's affairs to think clearly about right and wrong. It will not do to say that he is no better judge of right and wrong than others. Perhaps not, but the point is that the ethical view of things is so often obscured by self-interest, British interests, political passion, party feeling, that men who are quite capable of discerning between right and wrong when they are made to face the problem, do not look at it squarely from that point of view. The other night I was crossing from Bergen to Hull, and on the upper deck two men were on the look-out for danger ahead. And more than once the boat was slowed down in obedience to orders shouted down the tube by the officer in charge. Suppose the engineers below had said—"What does that fellow above know about engines and driving a ship more than we? We are quite as good judges of danger as the man on deck." Perhaps so—but it happens that they are not on deck *to see the danger*. The minister is the man on the look-out. He may not be a better judge of right and wrong than the men sweating down below, but he can see, as they cannot, the course the ship is taking, and it is his business to warn them of dangers they are not conscious of. They are so absorbed in driving the vessel of life and getting the last ounce out of the boilers, that the ethical perils ahead escape their attention, and they ought to be grateful to the man on the look-out, who tells them of the shoals and rocks on which they may make shipwreck. The minister is there expressly to keep an ethical look-out. All men have consciences, but there is a very great difference in the quality of consciences. The minister, above all men, is required to have a great conscience, a lofty and large moral configuration, a conscience astronomically timed and steady in its wide orbit as are the stars in heaven's order.

Of course the point of all this lies in the application. Is there any region of human life and human affairs in which ethics do not apply? Take politics, that is, national affairs. Are we to rule out ethics from national affairs? If not, how can you rule out national affairs from the pulpit? It is impossible, and there has never yet been a live, vigorous pulpit but on occasion dealt with politics. The Hebrew prophets were nothing if not political and ethical. And you cannot mention a modern prophet worth his salt who excluded national affairs from his discourses. Priestley, Channing, Theodore Parker,

Charles Beard, in our our own communion; Dale, Berry, Spurgeon, Binney among orthodox Nonconformists; Robertson (of Brighton), Liddon, Arnold, Stanley, Maurice in the Episcopal Church—all were found at some time or other handling great social and political questions in the pulpit. The outcry against political preaching—that is against the moralising of politics in the pulpit—is quite modern. There was a time when all our pulpits rang with denunciations of slavery, and no one complained. Our Free Church pulpits dealt freely with such political questions as Catholic Emancipation, the Opening of the Universities, the Abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, National Education, Temperance Reform, the Burials Act, although these questions provoked wide differences of opinion among equally good men. Since when have we become so squeamish that we cannot listen to a temperate and sincere expression of opinion which differs from our own? Congregations ought to rejoice to have the warm and living questions of the day treated solely from the point of ethics. Mr. Hamerton tells us that in "society" conversation is by common consent confined to sport, as the subject which least divides us. Politics and religion are tabooed in social life, because on these subjects men are intolerant, and cannot keep their tempers. What a confession! It means that as yet society is only half-civilised. Is the same principle to be applied to the pulpit, and are preachers carefully to eschew great national questions which have tremendous moral issues, because on these questions men are intolerant of differences, and cannot listen with patience to a conscientious statement on the other side? When men are truly civilised and truly cultured, they will be eager to hear what good and educated men, who are experts in ethics, have to say on the grave matters of national obligation, and will demand that the pulpit shall not shrink from public life, but shall add its quota, and give what help it can to the formation of a right national opinion.

I say all this without any reference to the view I take of the South African question. I have heard sermons in justification of the war, and sermons denouncing the war, and I have not quarrelled with men for giving me the result of their effort to come at a right moral judgment. I should be ashamed of myself if I could not listen to a man deeply moved by the passion for righteousness, who spoke out honestly and warmly for a view of the situation I did not entertain. The abler such a man the more I should benefit, even though he failed to convince me of his position, since it is always an advantage to hear what a good and capable and conscientious man can say on the other side.

What I cannot abide, you will forgive me for saying it, my dear Bob, is the position you argue for in your letter. To keep silence on great questions, on the things which really interest men, and which involve difficulties of conduct and perplexing moral problems, does not commend itself to me as the *role* of a prophet. I would a thousand times rather that a man opposed my views than that he should say the pulpit has no light and help on these matters. That would mark the ruin of the pulpit. A pulpit that keeps apart from life, from human affairs, from national interests, from the things about which men feel strongly, has no longer any *raison d'être*. I am not advocating the introduction of party and personal questions into the pulpit; I am quite alive to the need of tact and tolerance and kindly feeling in dealing with disputed subjects; I agree that if a minister takes up a strong line in the pulpit he must manfully, and without complaining, accept the consequences, however painful; I fully admit that no minister has a right to stone his congregation for not agreeing with him, and that the man is a fool who worries his congregation with mere fads and idiosyncrasies of his own. But I cannot agree to the ruling out of national affairs from the preachers' sphere. Of course, if a man is not a prophet at all, but just a tame Levite, anxious only not to offend, ambitious only to be thought a safe man; if his great care is to find a way round thorny points, and to say nothing in condemnation of evil, except when everybody is on the side of condemnation; if he eagerly listens to people who tell him that he must not spoil his influence for good by dealing with troublesome questions, why he may find himself clothed in soft apparel and seated at rich men's tables, but his will never be the word which touches to the quick the human consciences, or moves men and women to brave endeavour, or urges the world along the path of righteousness.

I write warmly, Bob, because I believe you have somethiug of the true prophet within you, and I do not want to see that something choked by unworthy considerations of what is merely safe and judicious.

Your affectionate Uncle,

THEOPHILUS BROWN.

Morality or Religion?

AN ADDRESS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

It is said, you remember, that Joseph in a moment of sudden and severe temptation threw himself back upon the thought, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" and so was saved.

I choose this as an illustration of the difference between morality and religion. Many of us, I am afraid, think that one is the other, or that one will do for the other, or, if we feel that there is a difference, we do not know how to explain it.

You can say that religion is morality, but you cannot say that morality is religion. The difference is this: Morality is the idea of duty alone, religion is the idea of duty linked with the idea of God.

What account could you give of duty by itself, apart from the idea of God? Duty to whom? to what? What is there to make it binding? or, if binding on you, to make it binding on me? What is the foundation on which it rests? Is it custom? Is it convention? Is it experience? Is it expediency? Is it the letter of the law? "You must not steal"

—why not? "You must not lie"—again, why not? Those are offences against Society. Why should I care for Society? Suppose I do care for Society, Society cannot make lying and stealing wrong, it can only forbid them; how am I to know that they are wrong in themselves? What becomes of the idea of duty? Can it stand alone?

I do not think the idea of duty by itself would have helped Joseph very much. There was no settled public conscience behind him, and, if his own conscience was only his own, what was there to make it imperative? Why should he obey it? In short, what was there to determine duty at all?

That which determined in his mind the idea of duty was the idea of God. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" That which makes right right, and wrong wrong, is the supreme holiness of God, claiming for its own the whole realm of personality. This it is that makes right binding and valid and universal and eternal. Here is the sanction, the authority, for morality. If there are innate ideas in us of right and wrong, it is because they correspond to, and are derived from, the distinctions in the divine mind between that which is right in itself, eternally right, and that which is wrong in itself, eternally wrong. The moral sense is the holiness of God feeling its way through us; the moral law, "Be ye holy," is one with, and issues out of, the absolute law, "I am holy."

Consider the importance of this in its bearing upon Sunday-school education. We profess an anxiety about the education of other people's children; we are even ready to undertake it. It is undertaking a great deal. A responsibility like this no one ought to accept who has not thought out very carefully what it is he is going to do, and how it ought to be done. The first question to be considered is whether the teaching is to be simply moral, or also religious. Suppose you are content with teaching the idea of duty, viz., that the members of your class *ought* to be honest, truthful, brave, pure, temperate; and *ought not* to be the opposites. How will you show that duty is binding, authoritative, universal? To whom is the child to owe it? What force will there be in the unsupported arguments of "ought" and "ought not?" Some years ago, out of 1000 convicts at one time in prison, it was found that 757 ha[d] been Sunday-school scholars. These were con[victs], criminals convicted of serious an[d] deliberate crimes. The figures do not prov[e] very much, but it would have been natura[l] to suppose that these proportions would be reversed. When life is settled and smooth, a turn of the helm may seem to be enough, bu[t] when the passions are like strong rapids whirling the soul this way and that, the touch of abstract duty is hardly felt, and nothing will keep it true except the thought, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Moreover, duty is not the simple, easy thing to teach it is sometimes thought to be. You remember the great stir there was some time ago about a little book entitled "What would Jesus do?" It showed that there were thousands of Sunday-school people who still wanted to know in a clear, unmistakable way what their duty was; and, when duty itself is not very decided, the thought of failure in duty is not very alarming, is one to which we soon grow accustomed. But link the idea of duty with the idea of God, and ask yourself, "Is this thing, whatever Society may think of it, a sin against God?" and the whole aspect of the thing is altered; you will now ask yourself, "Am I prepared to sin against God, or not?" and that will give you pause, or nothing will.

The question immediately before us is this: In some districts the Sunday schools are taking the places of churches. What will be the effect if they teach the idea of duty without the idea of God, morality without religion? Is the school to have a religious basis? If it is, each teacher must satisfy himself that in teaching the idea of duty he intends to explain wrong-doing as sin against God. If not, on what authority can he hope to teach it? If not, is he right in seeking the post of teacher?

This is the problem: What is the idea of duty, what its authority and sanction, what its value, without the idea of God? It is a problem that must force itself upon thoughtful minds, upon all who are gravely interested in the education of the young.

Duty, I confess, I can neither love nor understand—and, therefore, cannot teach—except as the "daughter of the voice of God."

E. P. Barrow.